

Exhibit 7

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RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

DNI declassifies Brennan notes, CIA memo on Hillary Clinton 'stirring up' scandal between Trump, Russia

A source said Brennan's handwritten notes were taken after briefing Obama on the matter

By Brooke Singman · **Fox News**

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EXCLUSIVE: Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe on Tuesday declassified documents that revealed former CIA Director John Brennan briefed former President Obama on Hillary Clinton's purported "plan" to tie then-candidate Donald Trump to Russia as "a means of distracting the public

from her use of a private email server" ahead of the 2016 presidential election, Fox News has learned.

Ratcliffe declassified Brennan's handwritten notes – which were taken after he briefed Obama on the intelligence the CIA received – and a CIA memo, which revealed that officials referred the matter to the FBI for potential investigative action.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence transmitted the declassified documents to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees on Tuesday afternoon.

"Today, at the direction of President Trump, I declassified additional documents relevant to ongoing Congressional oversight and investigative activities," Ratcliffe said in a statement to Fox News Tuesday.

A source familiar with the documents explained that Brennan's handwritten notes were taken after briefing Obama on the matter.

"We're getting additional insight into Russian activities from [REDACTED]," Brennan notes read. "CITE [summarizing] alleged approved by Hillary Clinton a proposal from one of her foreign policy advisers to vilify Donald Trump by stirring up a scandal claiming interference by the Russian security service," Brennan's notes read.

The notes state "on 28 of July." In the margin, Brennan writes "POTUS," but that section of the notes is redacted.

"Any evidence of collaboration between Trump campaign + Russia," the notes read.

The remainder of the notes are redacted, except in the margins, which reads: "JC," "Denis," and "Susan."

The notes don't spell out the full names but "JC" could be referring to then-FBI Director James Comey, "Susan" could refer to National Security Adviser Susan Rice, and "Denis" could refer to Obama chief of staff Denis McDonough.



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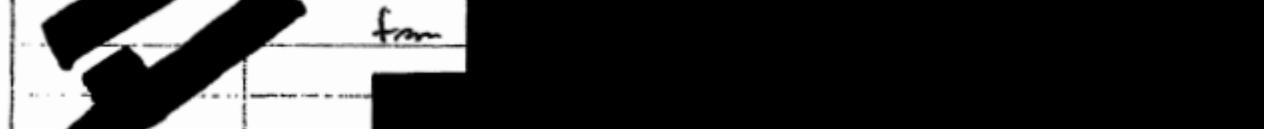
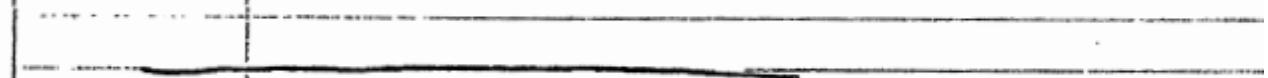
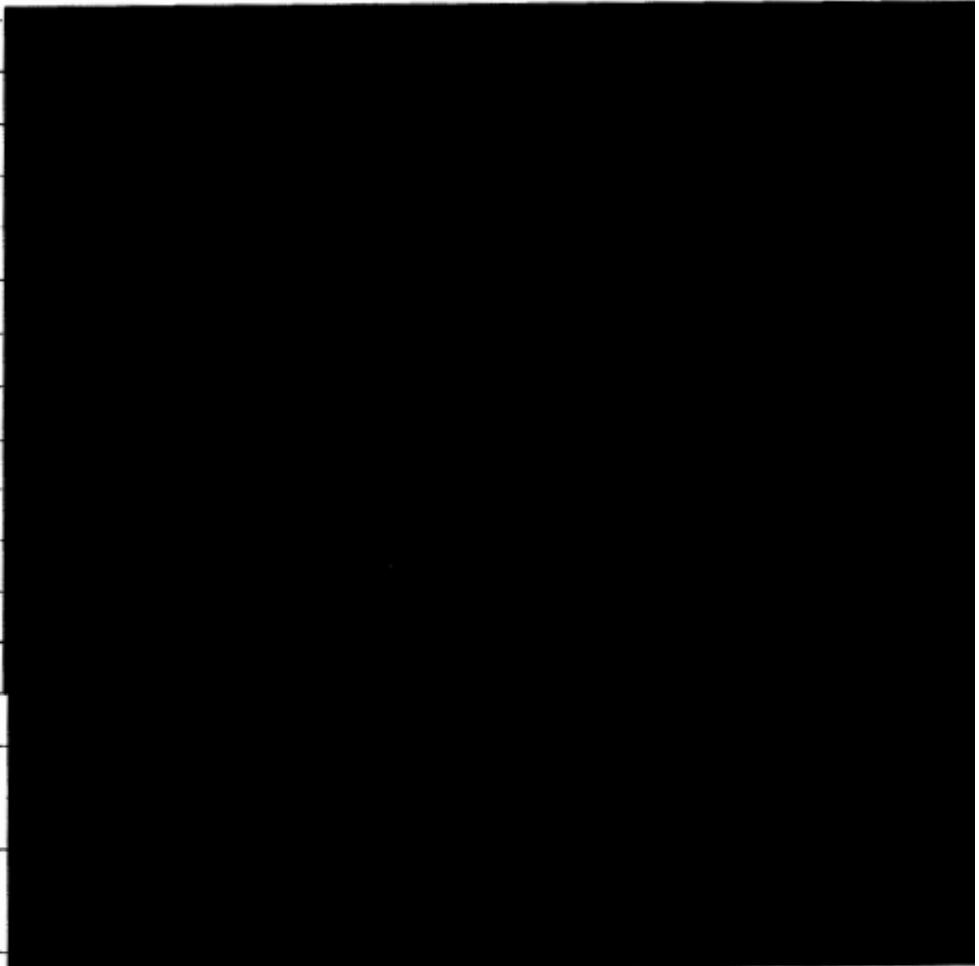
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DECLASSIFIED by DNI Ratcliffe on 6
October 2020



* We're going additional might into Russia

from [REDACTED]

The declassification comes after Ratcliffe, last week, shared newly-declassified information with the Senate Judiciary Committee which revealed that in September 2016, U.S. intelligence officials forwarded an investigative referral on Hillary Clinton purportedly approving "a plan concerning U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump and Russian hackers hampering U.S. elections" in order to distract the public from her email scandal.

That referral was sent to Comey and then-Deputy Assistant Director of Counterintelligence Peter Strzok.

"The following information is provided for the exclusive use of your bureau for background investigative action or lead purposes as appropriate," the CIA memo to Comey and Strzok stated.

"This memorandum contains sensitive information that could be source revealing. It should be handled with particular attention to compartmentation and need-to-know. To avoid the possible compromise of the source, any investigative action taken in response to the information below should be coordinated in advance with Chief Counterintelligence Mission Center, Legal," the memo, which was sent to Comey and Strzok, read. "It may not be used in any legal proceeding—including FISA applications—without prior approval..."

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DECLASSIFIED by DNI Ratcliffe on 6 October 2020

DOJ-RE

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

07 September 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

ATTENTION: Peter P. Strzok, II
Deputy Assistant Director for
Operations Branch I,
Counterintelligence Division

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] CROSSFIRE HURRICANE: [REDACTED]

REFERENCE: None

1. [REDACTED] Action Required: The following information provided for the exclusive use of your Bureau for background investigative action, or lead purposes, as appropriate. Please provide a copy of this memorandum to FBI Special Agent [REDACTED]

"Per FBI verbal request, CIA provides the below examples of information the CROSSFIRE HURRICANE fusion cell has gleaned to date," the memo continued. "'An exchange [REDACTED] discussing US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's approval of a plan concerning US presidential candidate Donald Trump and Russian hackers hampering US elections as a means of distracting the public from her use of a private email server."

The memo is heavily redacted.

COMEY SAYS NEW INFORMATION THAT HILLARY CLINTON DRUMMED UP RUSSIA CONTROVERSY TO VILIFY TRUMP 'DOESN'T RING A BELL'

Ratcliffe informed the committee last week that the Obama administration obtained Russian intelligence in July 2016 with allegations against Clinton, but cautioned that the intelligence community "does not know the accuracy of this allegation or the text to which the Russian intelligence analysis may reflect exaggeration or fabrication."

According to Ratcliffe's letter, the intelligence included the "alleged approval by Hillary Clinton on July 26, 2016, of a proposal from one of her foreign policy advisers to vilify Donald Trump by stirring up a scandal claiming interference by Russian security services."

Nick Merrill, Clinton's spokesperson, called the allegations "baseless b---t."

But Ratcliffe, in a statement released after the information was made public, pushed back on the idea he was advancing "Russian disinformation."

"To be clear, this is not Russian disinformation and has not been assessed as such by the Intelligence Community," Ratcliffe said in a statement to Fox News. "I'll be briefing Congress on the sensitive sources and methods by which it was obtained in the coming days."

A source familiar with the documents told Fox News on Tuesday that the allegation was "not disinformation."

"This is not Russian disinformation. Even Brennan knew, or he wouldn't be briefing the president of the United States on it," the source said. "There is a high threshold to orally brief the president of the United States and he clearly felt this met that threshold."

Another source familiar with the documents told Fox News that "this information has been sought by hundreds of congressional requests for legitimate oversight purposes and was withheld for political spite—and the belief that they'd never get caught."

The source added that the Brennan notes are significant because it is "their own words, written and memorialized in real time."

Meanwhile, last week, during a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Comey was asked whether he received an investigative referral on Clinton from 2016, but he said it didn't "ring any bells."

"You don't remember getting an investigatory lead from the intelligence community? Sept. 7, 2016, U.S. intelligence officials forwarded an investigative referral to James Comey and Strzok regarding Clinton's approval of a plan [about] Trump...as a means of distraction?" Graham asked Comey.

"That doesn't ring any bells with me," Comey said.

"That's a pretty stunning thing that it doesn't ring a bell," Graham fired back. "You get this inquiry from the intelligence community to look at the Clinton campaign trying to create a distraction, accusing Trump of being a Russian agent or a Russian stooge."

Graham questioned "how far-fetched is that," citing the fact that Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee, through law firm Perkins Coie, hired Fusion GPS and ex-British intelligence officer Christopher Steele to author and compile information for the controversial and unverified anti-Trump dossier.

The Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee, through law firm Perkins Coie, hired Fusion GPS and ex-British intelligence officer Christopher Steele to author and compile information for the controversial and unverified anti-Trump dossier.

The dossier contains claims about alleged ties between Donald Trump and Russia that served as the basis for Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrants obtained against former Trump campaign aide Carter Page.

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION BRIEFED ON CLAIMS HILLARY CLINTON DRUMMED UP RUSSIA CONTROVERSY TO VILIFY TRUMP, DISTRACT FROM EMAILS

Comey maintained that the referral did not “sound familiar.”

Meanwhile, House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member Devin Nunes, R-Calif., called the information, and potentially forthcoming documents “smoking guns.”

“The documents that are underlying that we now have seen, I have only seen a few of those – they’re smoking guns,” Nunes said on “Sunday Morning Futures” this week. “That information definitely needs to be made available to the American public.”

Nunes added that there is "even more underlying evidence that backs up" the information Ratcliffe released, and called the amount of time it took for allies of the president to get the information declassified and made public "mind-boggling."

"This has been a very difficult task for us to get to the bottom of, because you have corrupt officials," Nunes said.

Attorney General Bill Barr last year appointed U.S. Attorney of Connecticut John Durham to investigate the origins of the FBI's [Russia probe](#) shortly after special counsel Robert Mueller completed his years-long investigation into whether the campaign colluded with the Russians to influence the 2016 presidential election.

It is unclear whether this information will be considered part of Durham's investigation.

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